(e) and (f) Provisions have been made in the Beedi & Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966 to safeguard the interest of beedi workers including women workers and provision for providing creche facilities in beedi establishment where more than 50 female workers are employed also exists. Further, employment of children, below 14 years of age, in the process of beedi making stands prohibited under the Beedi & Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966 as well as the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986.

**Three-fold rise in child labour by the year 2000**

4320. SHRI SANATAN BISI: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of existing Labour Force and Planning Commission's assessment, the number of child labour by the year 2000 would have three-fold rise; and

(b) if so, the action to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) and (b) As per the 1981 census the total number of working children in the country was 13.6 million. According to 1991 census, the number of working children is 11.28 million. It is unlikely that the number of child labour by the year 2000 would have three fold rise. The Government, however, is committed to a policy for elimination of child labour in all its forms and taken a series of step for enforcing existing legislative provisions and rehabilitation of child labour.

**Public hearing on Child Labour Organised in New Delhi**

4321. SHRI TARA CHARAN MAJUMDAR: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether some public hearing on child labour was organised on 31st March, 1997 at New Delhi;

(b) if so, the details thereof, with objectives;

(c) whether the organisers would succeed in their compaign against child labour by organising such public hearings;

(d) whether Government propose to encourage such steps against child labour; and

(e) the other measures Government propose to take to end child labour in the country?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) and (b) The Campaign Against Child Labour (CACL) had organised a public hearing on child labour and the 2nd National Convention on Child Labour on 30th March—1st April, 1997 in New Delhi. The main demands and recommendations made in the public hearing, inter alia, included the provision of free compulsory, relevant and quality elementary education to all children, prohibition of the employment of children upto the age of 14 in all sectors, and strict enforcement of the direction of the Supreme Court Judgement in M.C. Mehta V/s State of Tamil Nadu.

(c) and (d) Generation of awareness among the public against the evil of child labour is an important element of the Governments programme for the elimination of child labour. It is felt that such campaigns do help in creating such awareness and need encouragement.

(e) Government has taken a series of steps for the elimination of child labour working in hazardous occupations. Under the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986, the employment of children is prohibited in 7 occupations and 18 processes contained in parts A and B of the schedule to the Act. There are also legal provisions in various other labour laws safeguarding the interest of working children. The legal provisions are en-